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Members of the Appropriations Committee of the Connecticut General Assembly

Senator Cathy Osten, Senator Paul Formica, and Representative Toni Walker, Tri-Chairs,

Subject: Restoration of Funding for the Connecticut Humanities Council Inc. within the budget of the Department of Economic & Community Development

I am deeply concerned about the sustainability of one of our state's most valuable organizations, the Connecticut Humanities. Please restore the \$1.73 million appropriation for this vitally important source Connecticut heritage organizations. The appropriation was included in the state budget approved by the legislature in 2016, but later removed by line-item veto after the budget was passed.

The Colchester Historical Society, where I serve as Co-President, has been the fortunate recipient of several Connecticut Humanities grants as well as beneficiaries of their StEPs-CT program. Our participation in the StEPs-CT program has enabled our organization to emerge from obscurity to prominence in our community and our region. The STEPS-CT program is singular in its dedication to educating and mentoring Connecticut's heritage organizations not just toward sustainability, but toward eminence during a challenging era of digitally distracted populations.

Colchester is unique for its long, rich history and because we have benefitted from the Connecticut Humanities funding, we have substantially improved the community engagement in our educational exhibits and outreach programs. Our surveys document a distinct increase in visits to the Colchester History Museum after the installation of new Connecticut Humanities funded

wayfinding signs. Increased visitorship has enlightened our community to Colchester's rich history with a goal towards engaging our population in understanding the relevance of our history.

The state appropriation to Connecticut Humanities benefits hundreds of other organizations across the state, many of which have no other source of support for exhibits, lectures and other public programs. These programs are of high quality, ensured by the long-standing competitive grant award process administered by Connecticut Humanities.

This funding also leverages significant support from foundations, individuals and myriad volunteers who help with and benefit from these events. An economic study has shown that more than 5,000 jobs are supported and 22,000 volunteers are engaged by these initiatives.

Thank you for your attention.

Submitted by:

Georgeanne Liverant

Colchester Historical Society Co-President